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A3011738

Expert meeting on the Future of Work in Asia: Skills development strategies to promote employment-rich and equitable growth in the care economy

17 – 19 September 2018

Turin, Italy

An activity organized by the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization under the South-South Triangular Cooperation project on the Future of Work in Asia financed by the Chinese Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security

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Expert meeting on the Future of Work in Asia: Skills development strategies to promote employment-rich and equitable growth in the care economy

Introduction

China's 13th Five Year Plan (2016-2020) emphasizes China's commitment to the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and to support developing countries in the areas of human resources, development planning and programmes, including through South-South Development Partnerships. As part of this commitment, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS) has established a South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) framework with ILO which combines a wide range of technical initiatives in the field of employment promotion and social protection. The Future of Work in Asia project is one of these initiatives.

The Future of Work in Asia project aims to contribute to employment-rich and equitable growth in Asia, by strengthening the capacity of local ILO constituents to mitigate risks and unlock opportunities in the wake of the large-scale labour market transformation processes shaping the Future of Work in Asia. The project focuses on two of these mega-trends, firstly the impact of demographic change on labour demand in high-growth sectors of the economy, and secondly the implication of new forms of non-standard employment on social protection systems.

The Future of Work in Asia project has two thematic pillars: (1) Skills development strategies to promote decent jobs in future high-growth sectors; and (2) Social security system reform in response to new forms of non-standard employment in the digital economy. The project intervention

mix foresees a combination of policy-level advisory services and micro-level capacity building support delivered jointly by ITCILO/ILO and public labour market research and social security research institutions from China and selected ASEAN countries. The expert meeting is a deliverable under the first thematic pillar.

Skills Development Strategies to Promote Decent Work in the Care Economy: Why?

Background and justification: The impact of demographic change

Demographic change has a profound impact on the world of work. According to 2015 data from the United Nations, the number of older persons—those aged 60 years or over—has increased substantially in recent years in most countries and regions, and growth is projected to accelerate in the coming decades. Projections from the UN indicate that in 2050 the oldest-old (people aged 80 years or over) will number 434 million, having more than tripled in number since 2015. Women will be overrepresented among the Elderly: globally, during 2010-2015, women outlived men by an average of 4.5 years. Next to Europe, East Asia is the sub-region most impacted by demographic change. For example, in China, in 2010 more than 7 per cent of the population were 65 years or older. By 2027 and 2050, the ratio is projected to increase to 14 per cent and 21 per cent, turning China into a hyper-aging society. As a result, Asia will eventually become home to the largest number of older people in the world.

New employment opportunities linked to demographic change: Focus on care-giving services

Demographic change opens up new economic development opportunities arising from the fast growing public and consumer expenditure related to population ageing and the specific needs of the population over 50. Examples for goods and services demanded by older people are community and home-based care, fall prevention and mobility equipment, devices to mitigate sensory impairment and cognitive decline, e-health and m-health (mobile phone) technology, elder-friendly medicines but also age-specific nutrition products and transport, travelling and leisure services.

Care giving services are particularly relevant from an employment promotion perspective since they are characterized by high labour intensity and require skills sets that pose comparatively low barriers to labour market entry for young job seekers. Also, labour demand is growing fast not only in Asia but also abroad in Europe and the United States, translating into job opportunities particularly for female migrant workers. On the downside, care-giving services carry a comparatively high risk of a decent work deficit since employment relationships are often precarious, working conditions can be poor and gender stereotypes prevail. Targeted skills development strategies to unlock the employment creation potential of the care economy therefore need to be norms-based, should combat gender-stereotypes and thus emphasize on employment-rich and equitable growth.

Meeting Objectives

The immediate meeting objective is to strengthen the evidence base about the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific, with focus on the impact of demographic change and the employment creation potential but also decent work risks of the care economy. The immediate meeting outcome is increased knowledge on skills development strategies to promote decent work in the care economy.

Invitee's profile

The meeting is designed for senior experts from national Labour Market research institutions from Asia and Europe.

Resource persons

Experts from ILO, ITCILO and research institutions from Asia and Europe will share knowledge and present findings about the link between decent work and demographic change, the employment creation potential and decent work deficit of the care economy and skills development strategies to promote employment-rich and equitable growth in the sector.

Agenda

Illustrated in the next page is the meeting agenda. The agenda facilitates a high degree of participation in order to promote knowledge exchange of good practices and peer-to-peer learning. The agenda includes a half-day field visit to study local good practice in the provision of LTC services.